Is My Child Academically Ready for High School?

By the end of middle school your child should have a solid foundation of academic knowledge that he or she can now build on with more challenging high school courses. At a minimum, your child should be able to:

Read at or near grade level. If your child struggles with reading by the time he or she enters high school, it will be difficult to catch up. Continue to encourage reading at home throughout the high school years.

Perform basic math skills. Your child should be able to do basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, as well as have the ability to use a protractor, ruler and calculator. Math skills are important for success in both math and science classes.

Have basic English skills. Your child should be able to write legibly. He or she should be able to write a simple paragraph that includes a topic sentence and a supporting sentence and uses correct punctuation.

If you child takes courses that challenge them academically and they do well in middle school, he or she has a better chance of making an easy transition to high school. Throughout high school your child should continue to take courses that challenge and interest them, in order to prepare him or her for college-level work.

What about Helping my Child Prepare for Post-High School Education and Training?

Post-high school education is becoming more and more important as the job market changes and more jobs require some sort of training beyond high school. If your child does not have a plan to go to college when he or she begins high school, the classes needed to enter college should still be taken, in case your child makes a decision part way through high school to go to a community college, vocational school or four year college.

It is easier to take the required coursework and get good grades from the beginning of high school, than to try to scramble to get the required classes during your child's senior year. This strategy will leave the door open for more options once your child has graduated from high school.

High school students interested in taking preparatory classes for postsecondary education and training may want to include the following basic college preparatory classes in their schedules:

4 years of English
3-4 years of Mathematics
2-3 years of Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
2-3 years of a Foreign Language
2-3 years of History and Geography
1 year of Visual and Performing Arts

For more information:

Adventures in Education at:
http://www.adventuresineducation.org

Family Education Network at:
http://www.familyeducation.com

Getting Ready for High School, American School Counselor Association at:
http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.cfm?L1=1000&L2=68

ACRN
America's Career Resource Network

Is *your* Child **Ready** *for* High School?

A parent's guide to preparing their child for educational success . . .

This brochure was created using a grant from the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

How Do I Know if My Child is Ready for High School?

Throughout middle school your child will be taking courses that will help him or her prepare for high school. Some students believe that middle school doesn't matter. They believe that the classes they take don't matter, and they can just get good enough grades to just get by. However, middle school is the time to begin learning the knowledge and skills that will provide the foundation for your child's high school education.

High school is the beginning of your child's future. High school students struggle with

- personal identity;
- fitting into a social group;
- peer pressure; and
- academic studies.

They are also concerned with dating, driving, and planning for life after high school.

As your child gets ready to enter high school, it is important that both you and your child look at all the educational options available at the high school, and create a plan that fits your child's needs, learning styles, and post-high school goals.

Plan to visit the high school your child plans to attend before you select classes or programs for your child. Find out about the various academic programs your child's high school offers such as advanced placement, vocational, honors, and remedial education. Learn about all the elective classes and try to help your child select electives that match his or her interests and career goals. Discuss all the options with your child, than listen to his or her interests.

How do I Continue to Support My Child in High School?

Your child still needs guidance and support from you as he or she navigates middle and high school. Your child needs you to:

- Communicate that education is still important and that you expect him or her to continue to do well in school.
- Provide guidance as he or she makes important decisions about classes to take and activities in which to be involved.
- Be knowledgeable about graduation requirements and college entrance requirements so you can help your child take appropriate classes in middle school.
- Keep the lines of communication open so you will be aware of problems with school work and friends.

Grades Count from Day One:

- Encourage your child to get good grades in middle school, so he or she feels confident with his or her knowledge in all subjects as high school approaches.
- Stay in contact with your child's teachers and counselors to help him or her stay on track with school progress.
- Stress to your child that grade point average is cumulative in high school and the grades earned in 9th grade are just as important as those earned in 12th grade. Your child must have good grades in high school to have the most educational options after high school.

What Skills Should My Child Have Before Entering High School?

The social and emotional fears that your child may have as he or she enters high school may have a negative impact on academic performance. Ask yourself if your child has the following social skills to cope with the changes high school may bring such as larger class sizes and being a part of the youngest group in the school (unlike his or her last year of middle school).

- Respect for diversity;
- An understanding of his or her own limitations;
- The ability to cope with stress;
- Responsibility for his or her own decisions;
- An understanding that attitude can affect his or her life; and
- The ability to modify behavior based on feedback from others.

Does Your Child Have These Important Skills Needed by High School Students:

- Time management skills;
- Good study habits;
- The ability to set attainable goals;
- The ability to stay focused in class;
- Good note-taking;
- The ability to complete homework (and turn it in!);
- Organizational skills;
- Motivation to learn and work hard; and
- Commitment to his or her education.